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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM IN THE AGENDA OF THE FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO THE PHILIPPINES

Letter dated 7 October 1992 from the Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit hereby a request, in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, that an additional item, entitled "Emergency assistance to the Philippines", be included in the agenda of the current session of the Assembly for its priority consideration in plenary meeting.

Annexed hereto is an explanatory memorandum concerning the request, which is being submitted pursuant to rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Narcisa L. ESCALER
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Explanatory memorandum

1. Mount Pinatubo volcano, which first erupted on 16 June 1991 after having been dormant for over 600 years, continues to wreak havoc and destruction in Central Luzon. As at 6 October 1992, Alert Level 5, meaning "eruption is in progress", remains in effect over the affected areas.

2. The gravest and immediate threats to life and property, however, come from lahar flows and flash flooding of heavily silted rivers, exacerbated by a spate of typhoons that have struck the northern Philippines. Of the 5.6 billion cubic metres of ash and other pyroclastic debris left in the wake of the 1991 eruptions, only some 2 billion cubic metres have so far washed down the slopes of the volcano. Vital infrastructures, including the MacArthur Highway and the North Luzon Expressway, which lie tens of kilometres from the volcano and are the major links between northern Luzon and the capital, are threatened and may have to be abandoned.

3. The most recent eruptions, confounded by three successive typhoons, spawned lahar flows and flash floods that left, as at 9 September, 36 persons dead, 10 injured, 15 missing and over 939,000 displaced, and over 6,350 homes destroyed or damaged. As at 5 October, total crop damage amounted to over 5 billion pesos. Some 1,254 hectares of land planted with rice, 1,476 hectares planted with sugarcane and 87 hectares planted with vegetables were damaged. Some 4,851 heads of livestock were lost.

4. The above-mentioned preliminary property losses are in addition to those caused by the 1991 eruptions, namely:

Number of homes destroyed	37,844	
Number of homes damaged	67,271	
Value of damages to infrastructure		3.4 billion pesos
agriculture		1.7 billion pesos
military facilities		3.8 billion pesos
other private properties		0.4 billion pesos

In addition, immense damage to and destruction of irreplaceable national monuments, for example, centuries-old churches and historic sites, were sustained.

5. The Government of the Philippines continues to take all possible measures to alleviate the suffering of the people affected.

6. Urgent international assistance is vitally needed.